

Fact Sheet on HB 6802 (Raised) An Act Concerning a Connecticut Out of School Time Grant Program

Why communities care about after school

Connecticut is home to more than 610,000 youth ages 5-17. At least two-thirds of these youth live in homes where parents work. Less than one-third of these, approximately 185,000, are involved in supervised, enriching after school programs.

We know that after school programs keep children safe, while teaching the skills and core values they need to succeed. We know that 3 to 6 pm are the peak hours of violent crime and that good after school programs can cut, by as much as 75%, the risk of becoming involved in crime.

We know that it costs more than \$300,000 to house one youth at the Connecticut Juvenile Training School while it takes about one-hundredth that amount, around \$3,000 to provide a quality after school program.

Cost Benefit Studies

- The return to taxpayers ranges from \$2.19 to \$3.22 for every dollar spent on high-quality after school programs, not including the significant savings that would result from lower crime (Brown, Frates, Rudge, and Tradewell 2002).
- Each child prevented from adopting a life of crime saves the country between \$1.7 million and \$2.3 million (Cohen, 1997).

What the State Can Do to Support After School in Connecticut

House Bill 6802 before the state legislature would create a new grant program to help support after school programs for children and youth. The appropriation of five million dollars called for in the bill would enable 3,500 young people to participate in after school programs – that's about 50 kids each in 70 different programs. If even three of these youth are put on the right track and diverted from a life a crime, the program would pay for itself. Any school, municipality, or non-profit organization, such as Youth Service Bureaus, Family Resource Centers, Boys & Girls Clubs, would be eligible to apply for these grants.

In addition to providing programs that serve kids, the grants could also be used to conduct strategic planning around after-school needs in a community. This builds on three successful pilot projects begun last year in Plainville, Montville and Thompson where they did just that. The bill also provides support to improve the quality of existing programs by providing additional resources for staff training and technical assistance.

After school programs 1) keep kids safe, 2) help working families, 3) improve academic achievement, and 4) prevents crime. For five years in a row, a national surveys indicated that 9 out of 10 voters believe there should be organized activities or a place for kids to go after school everyday that provide opportunities to learn. Support for HB 6802 will make this a reality.

Making the Connections for After School in Connecticut

The Connecticut After School Network operates in partnership with CSACA – Connecticut's after school professional organization

The same study found that 90% of parents who work and are not home in the afternoon when their children return from school, describe after school programs as an absolute necessity--but 7 out of 10 parents say they personally have difficulty finding out-of-school opportunities in their communities.

After school programs are a great investment. There is significant research that shows that participation in out-of-school programs results in better school attendance, fewer drop outs, more positive attitudes towards school work, greater completion of homework and improved grades, higher aspirations for education beyond high school, better work habits and interpersonal relationships skills, and less risk behavior.

Organizations and individuals that submitted testimony in support of House Bill 6802 at the March 4th public hearing:

- Speaker of the House James A. Amann
- Representative Elizabeth Boukus
- Representative Anne L. Ruwet
- American Savings Foundation (New Britain)
- City of New Britain Parks and Recreation Department
- Connecticut After School Network
- Connecticut Charts-A-Course
- Connecticut Commission on Children
- Connecticut Federation of School Administrators (AFSA - AFL-CIO)
- Connecticut Parent Power (statewide)
- Connecticut Parent Power -- Middletown Parent Representative
- Connecticut School Age Care Association
- Connecticut Youth Services Association
- East Hartford ChildPlan. Inc.
- Education Connection (Litchfield)
- Hartford Public Library
- Lighthouse After-School Program (Bridgeport)
- Plainville Community Schools
- SBC Connecticut
- Solar Youth, Inc. (New Haven)
- The Artists Collective, Inc. (Hartford)
- United Way of Connecticut
- Waterbury Public Schools

“After school programs provide a safe environment where kids can improve their academic performance, interact with peers, engage in several types of activities including sports, music, and arts. Studies have shown that children who are involved with some type of after school activity are more likely to graduate and become productive and responsible members of our society.” – *excerpt from testimony from Donna Kehoe, East Hartford ChildPlan*

For more information about after school in Connecticut, contact Michelle Doucette Cunningham at the Connecticut After School Network at 203-483-9757 or via email at mdc@csaca.org.

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